

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Indiana's Self-Assessment: Services for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities (IDEA Part C)

Indiana Family and Social Services Administration
Bureau of Child Development/First Steps

BACKGROUND

The United States Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), selected Indiana as one of ten states to be monitored during the 2001-2002 monitoring cycle. OSEP utilizes a state Self-Assessment as one tool in their process to measure implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA '97).

The First Steps program of the Family and Social Services Administration and the Indiana Department of Education's Division of Exceptional Learners were notified in April 2001 that Indiana's Self-Assessment was due to be submitted the following December. The First Steps program administers Part C early intervention services to eligible children from birth to age three. The Division of Exceptional Learners administers Part B of IDEA '97, which governs services to students with disabilities from age three to 21. It was determined that the Part C and Part B agencies would work together and submit a combined Self-Assessment to OSEP.

Indiana sent representatives to the OSEP monitoring conference in Atlanta, Georgia, in July 2001. The conference introduced the Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process (CIMP) to guide the states in the development of their reports. Upon returning, Indiana's representatives planned details of the Self-Assessment process. It was decided that a joint Steering Committee would be utilized (representing Part B and Part C), with parents comprising the largest group of stakeholders. It was also decided that Part B and Part C would each utilize their own subcommittees to assist the state agencies and the Steering Committee. Meeting dates were set for the committee, as well as dates and locations for seven public meetings.

STAKEHOLDER STEERING COMMITTEE

Indiana's Stakeholder Steering Committee was the guiding force and decision-making body throughout the state's Self-Assessment

process. The committee's 14 members represented advocacy, training, family, and educational perspectives. They came from a variety of professional roles and leadership positions.

The Steering Committee met six times. In January, 2002, they reviewed performance indicator data for the 10 Part C Components and determined whether each met or exceeded their expectations of achievement.

WHAT DATA WERE AVAILABLE TO THE STEERING COMMITTEE?

The Steering Committee had access to all data sources, including state and federal reports, program policy and procedure information, comments and recommendations from the public meetings, System Point of Entry data, the Central Reimbursement Office provider and claims processing database, and subcommittee comments.

State and Federal Reports - Among these were the ICC Annual Reports, the Quarterly County Profile Reports, and the Peer Monitoring Reports.

First Steps Policy and Procedure Information - This included many forms and manuals, such as the Personnel Guide, the Practice Manual, the Combined Enrollment Form, and the IFSP.

Public Meetings - Public meetings were held during the week of October 22, 2001, in Indianapolis, Evansville, New Albany, Muncie, Fort Wayne, Merrillville, and Lafayette.

Approximately 175 persons attended the public meetings, which were publicized through advocacy organizations, direct mailings, news releases, and Web site announcements. OSEP provided six questions to guide the public meeting discussion and comments. Attendees also commented on additional topics of interest during the meetings.

Databases - This included the System Point of Entry database system and the provider and claims processing database maintained by the Central Reimbursement Office.

Subcommittees - Approximately 40 stakeholders participated as subcommittee members for Part C. The subcommittees discussed topics related to the 5 Part C Cluster areas: Early Intervention Services in Natural Environments, Family-Centered Services, Comprehensive Public Awareness and Child Find System, General Supervision, and Early Childhood Transition.

STAKEHOLDER STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Indiana's use of a joint Stakeholder Steering Committee enabled a combined Self-Assessment to be submitted and fostered collaboration among the state agencies in the process. Committee membership was drawn from the State Advisory Council of the Division of Exceptional Learners, as well as from the Interagency Coordinating Council, which represented early intervention services.

Stakeholder Steering Committee:

Paula Anderson	Parent/ Early Intervention Provider
Denise Arland	Parent/Chair, Interagency Coordinating Council
Brett Bollinger	Special Education Administrator
Rich Burden	Parent/Director, Indiana's Parent Training and Information Center
Milo Gray	Advocate
Susan Hansen	Advocate
Susan Kontos	Indiana Higher Education
J. Bret Lewis	Parent/Superintendent
Amy Cook Lurvey	Advocate
David Mank	Indiana Higher Education/UAP
John Nally	Parent/Department of Correction Administrator
Jackie Pitman	Administrator
David Schmidt	Teacher/Chair of State Advisory Council
Julie Wickham	Early Intervention Provider

The Stakeholder Steering Committee met on the following dates: September 10, October 9, November 16, November 30, and December 7, 2001; and January 11, 2002.

WHAT DID WE LEARN?

The 10 Self-Assessment Components and the Steering Committee Performance Level recommendations are as follows:

CLUSTER: EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES IN NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS

CE.1 - Family-centered service coordination effectively facilitates ongoing, timely early intervention services in natural environments.

Meets Expectations

CE.3 - The evaluation and assessment of child and family needs lead to identification of all child needs as well as all family needs, related to enhancing the development of the child.

Meets Expectations

CE.4 - Appropriate early intervention services in natural environments and informal supports meet the unique needs of eligible infants and toddlers and their families.

Meets Expectations

CLUSTER: FAMILY-CENTERED SERVICES

CF.5 - Family supports, services, and resources enhance outcomes for infants and toddlers and their families.

Exceeds Expectations

CLUSTER: PUBLIC AWARENESS AND CHILD FIND

CC.1 - The implementation of a comprehensive, coordinated Child Find system results in the identification, evaluation and assessment of all eligible infants and toddlers.

Exceeds Expectations

CC.2 - Families have access to culturally relevant materials that inform and promote referral of eligible infants and toddlers to the child find system.

Meets Expectations

CLUSTER: GENERAL SUPERVISION

GS.1 - Early intervention services (EIS) and free appropriate public education (FAPE) for children with disabilities are ensured through the State's systems for monitoring, and other mechanisms for ensuring compliance, and parent and child protections, are coordinated, and decision-making is based on the collection, analysis and utilization of data from all available sources.

Meets Expectations

GS.2 - Appropriate and timely services are ensured through interagency coordination and assignment of fiscal responsibility.

Meets Expectations

GS.5 - Appropriately trained public and private providers, administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals and related service personnel provide services to infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities.

Meets Expectations

CLUSTER: EARLY CHILDHOOD TRANSITION

C/BT.1 - Children exiting Part C receive the services they need by their third birthday, when appropriate.

Below Expectations

NEXT STEPS...WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

The CIMP Self-Assessment process does not stop with the submission of a state's Self-Assessment. Rather, submission of the Self-Assessment is the beginning of the next chapter in the process, improvement planning. Indiana and the nine other states in the current cycle of OSEP monitoring are now starting the improvement planning phase of Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process.

Improvement planning will help Indiana to use the results of the Self-Assessment process and identify priorities to better meet the needs of children with disabilities. Special emphasis will be placed on those Components deemed "below expectations" by the Steering Committee. First Steps will concentrate most of its efforts on Early Childhood Transition. For the other areas, strategies for continuous improvement will be implemented and ongoing activities will be monitored to ensure that high performance is maintained.

HOW CAN YOU BE INVOLVED IN IMPROVING RESULTS FOR CHILDREN?

The states in the current OSEP monitoring cycle will submit their improvement plans to OSEP on July 1, 2002. The First Steps staff and the Interagency Coordinating Council will coordinate the planning of services for infants and toddlers with disabilities (IDEA Part C). The Division of Exceptional Learners and the State Advisory Council will coordinate the planning of services for students with disabilities from age three to 21 (IDEA Part B). The Stakeholder Steering Committee will also be involved and will make recommendations prior to submission of the improvement plan.

You, as an interested stakeholder, can play an active role in the improvement plan. After reviewing this executive summary, you may wish to review Indiana's complete Part C Self-Assessment on the First Steps Web site.

Your comments and suggestions will be helpful in developing the improvement plan. We are especially interested in your suggestions regarding Early Childhood Transition. Your comments and suggestions may be made on the First Steps Web site, www.state.in.us/fssa/first_step/, or mailed to the following address:

First Steps CIMP Improvement Planning
402 W. Washington St., W-386
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Thank you for your interest in improving results for Indiana's infants and toddlers with disabilities.